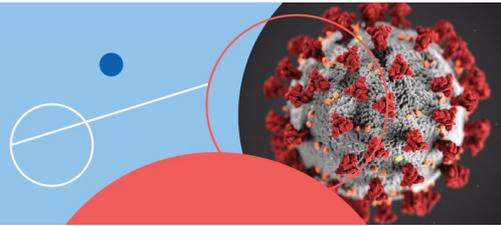


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taskforce on bbvs
sexual health and covid-19



Sexual Health Workforce Bulletin

Love in the time of COVID-19

1 May 2020

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Welcome to the Sexual Health Workforce Bulletin. These bulletins aim to provide Australia's sexual health workforce with information on changes in clinical practice, health service innovation, medical education, emerging research and useful resources.

This fortnight's bulletin contains an update from ASHM on how we are adapting our education programs during the pandemic. The bulletin also includes a [link to a survey](#) from the University of Melbourne's Sexual Health Unit (ethics approved), which aims to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the sexual and reproductive health of people living in Australia. Please consider distributing this link throughout your networks and to your patients, and you may even wish to complete the survey yourself!

Updates from several sexual and reproductive health services operating in different parts of Australia once again highlight our sector's dedication to promoting ongoing equitable access to sexual and reproductive health services during these unusual times. This edition's contributors include Family Planning Victoria, Shine SA, True Relationships & Reproductive Health, and Kirketon Road Centre.

Our previous bulletin mentioned [ACON's TransHub](#) as a resource for trans and gender diverse people, but we would like to highlight that this platform also includes resources for clinicians and other allies who support trans and gender diverse people.

Other resources include:

- A guide from Thorne Harbour Health on sex and intimacy in the time of COVID-19
- Webinars and recordings on abortion care, the 2018 PCOS guidelines, and information from ASHM's COVID-19 taskforce
- Links to relevant news items, recent research, relevant resources and upcoming education.

The bulletin has been developed by the ASHM Sexual Health Program with expert input by members of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) Australasian Chapter of Sexual Health Medicine (AChSHM) and the Taskforce on BBVs, sexual health and COVID-19.

We hope that you are finding this bulletin useful, and are keen to receive your submissions and ideas for future editions (please email these to sexualhealth@ashm.org.au). Please distribute this bulletin through your networks.

Stay safe and well,

Dr Vincent Cornelisse

ASHM Clinical Advisor

Medical Unit Manager and Staff Specialist, Kirketon Road Centre

&

Jessica Michaels

Sexual Health Program Manager

ASHM

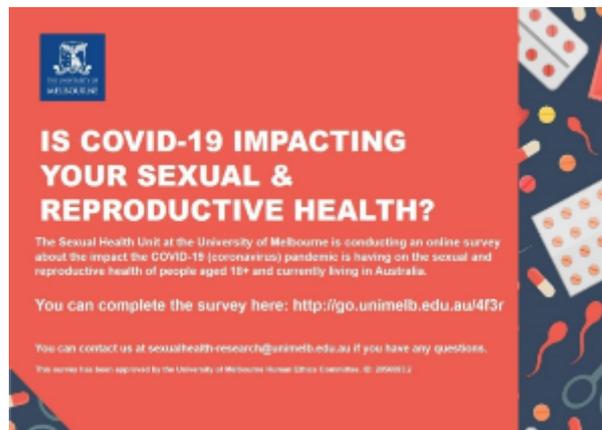
In this edition:

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Sector Updates

Report on sexual health services in Australia and New Zealand during the COVID-19 pandemic

The ASHM Taskforce's Sexual Health Cluster has conducted a review to highlight changes to key services, and to draw attention to increased service needs as sexual behaviour changes during the pandemic. [Read the report here](#)



Survey: Sexual and reproductive health during COVID-19

This survey from the University of Melbourne's Sexual Health Unit aims to investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sexual and reproductive health of people living in Australia. People can complete this survey if they currently live in Australia and are aged 18 years or older. They can complete this survey even if they haven't ever had sex, or are not currently having sex.

[Access the survey](#) and [click here to download the flyer](#). Please circulate through your networks.



Kirketon Road Centre (KRC) is a NSW Health facility in Kings Cross, Sydney, that provides comprehensive primary healthcare for homeless people (including addiction services), and sexual healthcare for the broader community, including treatment of HIV and viral hepatitis.

Some of the changes to our sexual health service in response to COVID-19 include:

- We encourage people to phone our service prior to attending, to see if we can assist by telehealth. For example for advice or repeat prescriptions.
- We have pro-actively contacted our HIV-positive clients, to bring forward their HIV reviews to avoid them needing a review at a possible future COVID-19 peak. HIV-positive clients whose HIV is stable and well-managed are then advised that their next review can be delayed by up to six months, and provided with adequate prescriptions to cover this time.
- Clients who seek an asymptomatic STI screen without known STI contact are encouraged to delay their screen until after the COVID-19 pandemic is over.
- Clients on PrEP are assisted by phone consultation. If there are no concerns, then they are advised how to manage their PrEP at a time of social isolation (some may wish to cease temporarily), and offered a prescription to be sent to a pharmacist. If there are concerns about sub-optimal PrEP adherence or risk factors for renal impairment then we facilitate a blood test for HIV serology and renal function testing, to be performed at our clinic or at a convenient pathology collection centre.
- Clients with STI symptoms or HIV risk are assisted as per usual, albeit with COVID-19 precautions (screened for COVID symptoms, temperature checked, additional infection control measures).

KRC has implemented significant changes to adapt out broader service in response to COVID-19, particularly to assist homeless people on the streets of Sydney, [which you can read about here](#).

Anti D and abortion: guidance during COVID-19

In the COVID-19 situation, RANZCOG advises that a clinician may appropriately decide not to administer anti-D prior to 10 weeks, for medical management of abortion, particularly when an additional visit may increase exposure of women and staff. [Read more here](#).



Family Planning Victoria: Adapting SRH care and education to advocate for our community

During this time, [Family Planning Victoria](#) is dedicated to communicating the importance of sexual and reproductive healthcare and education to our community and adapting our services to serve our clients. Our Box Hill and Melbourne CBD clinics remain open, operating via a telehealth model with minimal face-to-face client contact and bulk-billing services for the remainder of the financial year.

We continue to provide medical termination of pregnancy services via telehealth. To communicate this to the public and demystify and destigmatise the procedure, [we have released a factsheet outlining the telehealth MToP procedure](#). [We also collaborated on a social media graphic with 1800MyOptions which does the same](#).

FPV continues to provide insertion of IUDs and the contraceptive implant, with priority given to those most at risk of unintended pregnancy. The new clinic model involves a shortened time for clinic visit time (approx. 15 minutes) and includes two telehealth consults, plus consent form and video information about the procedure sent via text link. FPV recommends contraceptive implants and IUDs can be considered for extended use beyond their license during the coronavirus pandemic. [Find out more here](#).

Our Clinical Education Unit has moved swiftly to [make our professional learning courses for doctors, nurses, and community health workers available online in 2020](#).

Our Schools team has adapted an [extensive suite of online relationships and sexuality education learning for Victorian teachers and parents](#), free of charge.

The [FPV podcast 'Doing It'](#) remains a popular resource for parents, teachers and carers during this time.



SHINE SA: Clinical services and resources update

SHINE SA is committed to providing support to clients where possible. SHINE SA Woodville is temporarily closed however SHINE SA Hyde Street Practice remains open, with most of our consultations now provided by telehealth. All initial consultations are now by phone. We encourage those seeking a sexual health appointment to call (08) 8300 5300, for General Practitioner and specialist appointments call (08)7099 5320.

We are encouraging clients to call SHINE SA's [Sexual Healthline](#) on 1300 883 793; Toll free: 1800 188 171 (country callers only). The line is open Monday – Friday, 9:00 am – 12:30pm. [Visit our website](#) for more information on changes to our clinical services.

Resources for Health Professionals:

- [Contraception During the COVID-19 Pandemic Fact Sheet: Advice for Health Professionals](#)

Resources for Community and Clients:

- [Contraception During the COVID-19 Pandemic Fact Sheet for Clients](#)
- [Safety, Pleasure, Respect and COVID-19 Blog Post](#)



True maintains focused on service delivery during COVID-19

True Clinics across Queensland remain open, offering reproductive and sexual health (RSH) services via both telehealth and face to face consultations during the pandemic. This includes our outreach services into remote and rural Queensland. True regards the wellbeing of our clients and staff as a priority. Due to the developing events of COVID-19, True wants to reassure the community that we are responding to and cooperating in line with Government advice.

With clinics in Windsor (Brisbane), Rockhampton, Townsville, Toowoomba and Ipswich, True clinicians now offer a combination of both telehealth and face-to-face appointments depending on the service level required by clients. True clinicians will assess what is the most suitable method for consultation with a client and use telehealth where it is warranted to minimise the requirement for a client to come into the clinic during the pandemic.

During the telehealth consultation, True's clinicians determines the client's individual needs and where no procedure is required, can offer the appropriate information on requirements such as contraceptive advice, prescriptions and specialist referrals. All telehealth appointments are completely confidential.

Where a client requires a face to face consultation or an examination, the clinic can then arrange an appointment. For True clinic locations and contact details, [click here](#).

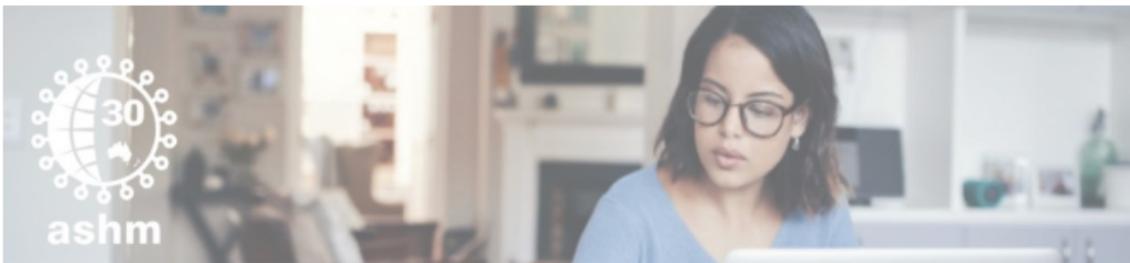
[Read more about how True has pivoted to continue clinical education during the pandemic](#)

INFO SHEET:
Sex, intimacy
and coronavirus

**thorne
harbour**
health*

Thorne Harbour Health have published guidance for the LGBTIQ communities focusing on what COVID-19 means for sex and intimacy. [Download the info sheet here](#).

Learning and Development



Workforce education in a post-COVID world

Adapting face-to-face training courses to online delivery is keeping a lot of us at ASHM very busy. We've run webinars for years, but a 6+ hour session, complete with group discussions, games and networking, is an entirely different kettle of fish. Retaining those really valuable components of face-to-face education while teaching via Zoom is a key challenge.

Making the materials interactive and engaging is essential. We are incorporating discussion questions and quizzes, and using break-out rooms to mimic the experience of small group conversation. We also want to ensure the content is relevant and timely, addressing the particular challenges of this moment – taking a sexual history via telehealth, anyone? Questions remain, such as how to divide hours of clinical content across multiple sessions without losing participants. We don't have all the answers yet, but we are ready to hit the ground running and most importantly, to listen to learners as they tell us what works and what doesn't.

We are also conscious that our audience are frontline healthcare workers, many of whom are facing unprecedented demands on their time. Continuing education in blood-borne viruses and sexual health may not be a priority for many at the moment. However developing and supporting the health workforce in these areas remains critical, so ASHM will be here with engaging online education for those who wish to learn.

Courtney Smith, Senior Project Officer, ASHM

[Access ASHM's training calendar here](#) and [online learning here](#)

Webinars and recordings

ABC Gippsland broadcast on sexual health during COVID-19

On 28 April, [ABC Gippsland's Breakfast program](#) put a spotlight on sexual and reproductive health during the pandemic. [Listen at the timestamps below:](#)

- 3:05:15 – Selena Gillham, coordinator of integrated programs at Gippsland Women's Health, discusses access to contraceptive and reproductive services
- 3:11:47 - Associate Professor Edwina Wright, chair of the ASHM taskforce, discusses sex and social distancing

Abortion care during COVID-19: Case study discussion

The most recent meeting of the Victorian Rural Clinical Network for Unintended Pregnancy and Abortion (held on 7 April) focused on this clinical case study presentation. [A recording is now available.](#)

COVID-19, HIV, Sexual Health and Viral Hepatitis: What's the new normal for the Asia Pacific?

The ASHM Taskforce regional advisory group discussed the implications of COVID-19 for the HIV, viral hepatitis and sexual health responses in Asia and the Pacific Regions. [Watch the recording.](#)

Australian PCOS Guidelines: An update for general practitioners

5 May 2020, 7pm – 8pm

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) affects a significant number of people of reproductive age and can have considerable impact on physical and emotional wellbeing. The first international evidence based guidelines on PCOS were developed in Australia and released in 2018. This webinar from SHINE SA will review the guidelines and discuss key recommendations for diagnosis and management in general practice. [Click here to read more and enrol.](#)

Find upcoming education

[ASHM Training calendar](#)

[Family Planning NSW](#)

[Children by Choice](#)

[Sexual Health Quarters](#)

[ShineSA](#)

Global news and research

Centring sexual and reproductive health and justice in the global COVID-19 response – [The Lancet](#)

Risks of Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) in Pregnancy: a Narrative Review – [Arch Acad Emerg Med](#)

How the COVID-19 Pandemic is Affecting Women’s Sexual and Reproductive Health - [IPS](#)

Coronavirus, pregnant women and infants: new research – [The Conversation](#)

COVID-19: What implications for sexual and reproductive health and rights globally? – [SRHM](#)

Health departments are concerned about spikes in STIs while attention is on COVID-19 – [The Verge](#)

When pandemics collide – [The Lancet HIV](#)

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Planning and Ending Gender-based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage - [United Nations Population Fund \(UNFPA\)](#)

Quick links

Contraceptive app launches feature to detect early symptoms of COVID-19 - [Women's Health](#)

The coronavirus pandemic has people rethinking their plans for having kids – [VOX](#)

Sex toy sales are skyrocketing during the coronavirus pandemic - [VICE](#)

Info hubs

AHPRA: [Telehealth guidance for health practitioners](#)

ASHM: [Taskforce on BBVs, sexual health and COVID-19](#)

CERSH: [April 2020 News Update \(subscribe to future editions here\)](#)

Marie Stopes Australia: [Sexual and reproductive health rights in Australia situational report / Service delivery updates](#)

RACGP: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information for GPs](#)

RACP: [how the college is supporting you](#)

RANZCOG: [COVID-19 information hub](#)

Scarlet Alliance: [COVID-19 impact and response for sex workers](#)

Please forward this bulletin to your networks. We welcome submissions for future editions of this bulletin from any individuals or organisations working in sexual health. Please email sexualhealth@ashm.org.au.



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Developing a sustainable HIV,
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Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis
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CIRCULATION INFORMATION

ASHM is a peak professional society representing a multidisciplinary health workforce in HIV, viral hepatitis and sexual health. We have a membership of over 3500 and almost 60 organisational members providing reach to a large majority of health care worker activity involved in the sector.

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